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ABSTRACT

A study investigated ability grouping for reading within a heterogenous classroom and the effect such grouping has on attitudes toward reading. Subjects, 23 students in an ethnically diverse third-grade classroom in central Virginia, completed reading attitude surveys. Classroom observations of the teacher and students were conducted. Results indicated that the students in the low group had attitudes in the bottom 50% of the class but not all of the students in the high group had high attitudes toward reading. Boys in the high group were found to have low attitudes toward reading while girls had higher attitudes. Almost all of the students preferred to read at home rather than at school. Findings suggest that: (1) teachers placed in a classroom or system that uses ability grouping can improve reading attitudes and achievement by treating all students the same; (2) students need choice in their reading selection; (3) creating a classroom centered on literature with some student choices may improve attitudes more than concentrating on basal readers and phonics; and (4) students do not necessarily have to like to read to be good at it. (Contains 10 references and 2 tables of data. The 18 questions comprising the reading attitude survey and the students' scoring sheets are attached. (RS)

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ED 371 345

Within Class Ability Grouping and Its Effect on Third Grade Attitudes Toward Reading

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Running head: ABILITY GROUPING

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Abstract

This study investigates ability grouping for reading within a heterogenous classroom and the effect such grouping has on attitudes toward reading. A review of the literature indicates that ability grouping within a classroom does not increase student achievement and can be detrimental to the self-concept and potential achievement of those students in the low group. Studies have shown that students in the two groups are often taught to read differently as well as treated differently in the classroom. This study evaluated the attitudes toward reading at home and at school for twenty third graders by comparing the attitudes of students in the high group to attitudes of students in the low group. I predicted that the students in the high group would have higher attitudes toward reading than the students in the low group. I hypothesized that the students in the low group would like to read at home. The results indicated that the students in the low group had attitudes in the bottom fifty percent of the class but not all of the students in the high group had high attitudes toward reading. Boys in the high group were found to have low attitudes toward reading while girls had higher attitudes. Almost all of the students preferred to read at home rather than at school.

Within Class Ability Grouping and Its Effect on Third Grade Attitudes Toward Reading

Literature Review

Ability grouping has been used in classrooms all over the United States. Schools group students many ways. One way is to group students in homogenous classrooms. Another way is to divide students by ability in certain subject areas within a heterogeneous classroom. A student could possibly be with one group for reading and another for math. The literature reviewed in this paper is concerned with the second way of grouping students.

Grouping within a classroom for reading, specifically, has been done to try and meet the instructional needs of a diverse classroom population using traditional basal series structure. Berghoff and Egawa (1991) studied ability grouping. They found that many teachers use ability grouping to be more efficient and effective in their classrooms. Three reading groups make sense if a teacher makes three assumptions: 1.) All learning should progress in a linear manner 2.) The teacher has sole responsibility for supporting each student in her classroom and 3.)The stigma attached to being grouped is negligible. Berghoff and Egawa (1991) feel that the great number of classrooms using such internal grouping suggests that teachers felt the merits of

ability grouping for instruction outweigh their consequences. The recent research, however, shows that ability grouping does not increase student achievement and is detrimental to student's self-concept and potential achievement in the low group. (Morgan cited in Berghoff and Egawa, 1991) Berghoff and Egawa (1991) believe learners need to have choices and develop their own courses for learning. Learners in a community classroom support one another not just the teacher. All students bring unique contributions to the classroom. The assumptions and beliefs of teachers using ability groups conflict with new research and trends pointing toward a new way to organize reading.

Berghoff and Egawa (1991) recommend changes to the traditional reading groups in classrooms. Providing whole class sessions in a classroom allows experiences to be shared. These common experiences provide for a common language to develop and the students can construct meaning from the experiences together. For example, a classroom trip to the local fire house can connect activities outside of the classroom with those inside the classroom. Students will learn to discuss ideas and problems, question others' ideas, and generate new problems and questions. The class or groups of students can work together to develop solutions to these ideas. Read alouds, choral reading, group story writing, poems, and newspapers can all be covered in a large group setting. Whole class sessions can also provide subjects for projects for students who share similar interests to

work together on in smaller groups (Berghoff and Egawa, 1991). In small groups students control their own learning by deciding on a common unit. For example a group may decide to construct a map of the fire house together (Berghoff and Egawa, 1991). By working in pairs, students can combine their different talents such as art and reading for a shared language experience. Students are able to learn individually through journals and portfolios. Berghoff and Egawa suggest that schools create a forum where children are able to express and negotiate ideas forming new meaning to their experiences. Most importantly, Berghoff and Egawa (1991) stress the importance of the structure in a classroom. This can be a teaching tool in a nontraditional and supportive learning environment. Students need to fell free to move around and have vast resources readily available to them for a rich atmosphere.

Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1991) developed a new way to teach reading in a first grade classroom after finding grouping was not meeting the needs of students in their class. Some students who were placed in low groups displayed reading difficulties for such reasons as limited home literacy experiences, immaturity, and inattentiveness. These problems lead to students being in low groups that became impossible to leave. The teachers knew that students should be moved out of the low groups when they showed improvements, but the bridge between the low level and the middle level was too big to jump.

As a result of these experiences Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1991) experimented with not ability grouping their classroom. They found the students in the low group learned much more and did not hinder the high group. These teachers used four types of reading experiences in their classroom. All four approaches were taught in blocks almost every day. The first was the basal block which concentrated on reading in partners. The second block was writing workshop which used inventive spelling. During the third block, the literature block, students picked real books of their choice to read with teacher assistance. The last block was the phonic block which focused on a new word wall and letter sorts to help students learn letter sound relationships. As a result of the four blocks, students were able to learn in a variety of ways without being grouped. Classmates could help classmates and low level readers were not at a disadvantage. Each child learns differently and with this block process had the opportunity to learn to read with the type of instruction he or she learns from best.

Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1991) found other advantages to this block process over the grouping classroom. Teachers had found that friendship lines were being formed according to reading groups. Ability grouping has been seen to contribute to racial segregation in ability grouped classes. Cunningham, Hall, and Defee (1991) suggested that the new organization of blocks in a classroom without ability grouping helps address these other

problems too.

Research has suggested that being in the low group hinders reading achievement. Studies show students in the low group often receive less beneficial instruction (Allington, 1983 cited in Cunningham, Hall and Defee, 1991, and Wuthrick, 1990). Wuthrick researched other reasons besides low reading performance or intelligence in a classroom that would place the low level group at a disadvantage. He found that groups formed according to reading ability levels were often instructed differently in a classroom setting (Wuthrick, 1990). Wuthrick researched the reading instruction given to the high group versus the low group and found alarming results. The Blue Jays or the high group had a more pleasurable reading experience. Often this group met first each day while the teacher was more alert and eager to teach. The interval of instruction was often longer than the Crows or the low group. Since the Crows had less time in a session, they therefore received less instruction.

The atmosphere during instruction that the two groups experienced also differed. The Blue Jays found a warmer atmosphere with a smiling teacher willing to make eye contact and lean toward her students with interest. The Crows found negative expressions, frowns, glares, and a teacher who leaned away from her students when they came to reading group. The criticism given to the Blue Jays was more respectful and in friendlier, softer tones than the criticism given to the Crows. The Blue

Jays were more often reprimanded with warnings while the Crows were often reprimanded with actual actions (Wuthrick, 1990).

One of the biggest difference was in how the two groups were actually taught to read. The Blue Jays instruction emphasized silent reading for 70% of the time which meant they read three times as many words a day than the Crows. Blue Jays made less errors so they moved at a faster pace and were able to move through a lesson a day. By reading more everyday, the Blue Jays had an advantage because children learn to read by reading (Gunning, 1992). Novice readers require practice like novice drivers do (Gunning, 1992). The Blue Jays were receiving more practice than the Crows who needed it the most.

The instruction of the Crows concentrated on reading orally and taking turns according to Wuthrick (1990). Students were to follow along in their textbooks which only invited more distraction. Teachers encouraged "word calling" in the Crows meetings to make students follow along. Anyone in the group could correct a reader's error by calling out the word. This halted the reader, discouraging fluency and may have contributed to making the reader nervous. Teachers encouraged Blue Jays to notice their own mistakes and corrected them less often. Blue Jays were corrected at the end of sentences rather than right when they made the mistake like the Crows. Crows made three to five more mistakes so they read less because they were stopped more. Teachers also pointed out difficult words for the Crows at

the beginning rather than allowing the student to learn to decode these words.

Blue Jays focused on the meaning of a story with comprehension questions rather than the phonics that the Crows were taught. Crows were usually asked literal questions to check on whether or not they were paying attention not for meaning. They worked on phonics in isolation twice as much as the Blue Jays, and only read silently 30% of the time. Unlike the Blue Jays, Crows became hesitant to guess at unfamiliar words and found it hard to develop fluency (Wuthrick, 1990).

The Crows were at a disadvantage in large group settings during subjects other than reading. Crows were found to sit away from the teacher which did not allow for as much social interaction as the Blue Jays. Crows had less latitude in behavior and were recognized for questions less frequently. Low level questions were asked to the low level readers while the harder questions were given to the Blue Jays. Wuthrick (1990) found that the Crows needed the most reading time and instruction time but were actually receiving the least. She suggested that the Crows be taught like the Blue Jays for higher level reading to occur. A second reading session for the Crows would be helpful also. The Crows need emphasis on silent reading and meaning like the Blue Jays. The Crows also need to read pleasure material that is easy for them to read and feel successful. With the same nurturing atmosphere of the Blue Jays, the Crows may be

able to move to different groups.

The low level readers have more problems than just instruction in a classroom. Being labelled a low level reader causes its own problems such as isolation for a child as well as emotional problems and educational injury. (Juliebo and Elliott, 1984) A case study of a boy named Matt showed the difficulties he had once he was labelled. Matt was smart and showed great enthusiasm for learning as he entered school. He could read basic words when he went to kindergarten. When he entered second grade, things turned around. Matt's parents were told he had reading problems and testing was done. He was labeled a low level reader and put in remedial reading programs. Matt shut down and stopped working or trying in school. He "fulfills Kirps 1974 observation that adverse classification stigmatizes students, reducing both their self-image and their worth in the eyes of others." (Jubliebo and Elliott, 1984, p.3) In third grade Matt changed schools and was not labeled a slow reader or placed in remedial reading. His teacher and parents worked hard to bring his self concept up again and eventually Matt reengaged in school but had difficulty forgetting the label he was given in the third grade.

Donald Howard states (1988) "the way students feel about reading is closely related to their degree of success with it" (p. 39). Therefore teachers wanting to improve reading abilities must overcome negative attitudes toward reading. The students in

the low level reading groups have been labeled poor readers and have little enthusiasm for reading. These students have poor performance which leads to poor grades which leads to a growing poor self concept. How can a positive feeling exist when a child is asked to do something he does poorly every day? Students in the low ability group avoid reading because they do not read well. (Wuthrick, 1990) The poor readers feel inferior to their higher level classmates and find school a dreadful and threatening place.

> "Ways must be found to get poor readers to read material that means something good to them. As Goodman (1987) has observed, reading teachers must 'find as many ways as possible to get them involved in reading all sorts of books and other print. Nothing builds reading ability as much as time spent reading.'" (Howard, 1988, p. 40)

According to a survey done by Heathington and Alexander in 1984, teachers spent little time on assessing or building positive attitudes in the classroom even though they felt attitudes were important in learning to read (Howard, 1988). In order to help poor readers, schools need to create an atmosphere where self esteem can grow. If reading can show students self worth, negative attitudes can be altered. Twenty five percent of what students learn can be attributed to how students feel about

themselves as learners. If teachers can improve students' self-concepts, they will learn more (Gunning, 1992). If teachers value their students and expect the best from them, they are more likely to give their best back (Gunning, 1992).

Few students are reading for pleasure even if they can read. A study of 155 fifth graders showed that the typical child spent fewer than five minutes per day reading on his own (Anderson, Wilson, and Fielding, 1988). Another study of third graders reported that nearly 14 percent of those surveyed never read for fun, less than half read for pleasure daily , and only three-quarters of the students read recreationally once a week (Applebee, Langer, and Mullis, 1988). Students need material to read that is meaningful to them. This improves attitudes and reading levels (Howard, 1988). New approaches involving good children's books to teach are necessary. First, students who read more, read better (Gunning, 1992). Second, students who are given some choice in what they read have a more favorable attitude toward reading (Gunning, 1992). By using child's literature in a reading program, teachers can engage more students in reading what they show an interest for and hopefully improve attitudes and reading levels at the same time.

To improve reading ability teachers must improve negative attitudes (Bosh, 1989). Teachers have the means to help combat the illiteracy problem by being aware of the individual needs in their classroom and helping their students learn in any feasible

way possible. Helping students gain positive attitudes toward reading means dealing with stress reactions to reading and getting parents involved (Bosh, 1989).

Method

Description of Classroom

A third grade classroom in Central Virginia was chosen as the site for this study. The class is one of two third grade classes at the school. The class is composed of mostly middle class students who are ethnically diverse.

The classroom structure is nontraditional. The students sit in groups of desks and not in rows to encourage students to help others. A table and bookshelf in the front of the room are filled with books on different levels for the children to select from during silent reading. The students are allowed to take the books home as long as they return them. Books are displayed around the chalkboard area that correlate to the units being studied, especially in social studies. These books rotate every few weeks and are a part of the books allowed to be selected by the students. In the back of the room there is a large oval table used by the teacher for reading groups and other group activities. Posters about good books to read line the walls. The students' works are also displayed in the classroom.

The reading program in the classroom involves three basic groups. The students were given Individual Reading Inventories at the beginning of the year to find out their level of functioning. This assisted the teacher in placing them in a level in a basal series. The groups are referred to in class by

the number of the level. Students are moved from one group to another according to the level they are reading on. One student is pulled out each day for resource reading due to a learning disability. Another student reads extra with the teacher each day whenever she can find time in order to give him extra practice. The groups are called back to the table in a different order each day to meet with the teacher. Each group reads something on their level. The students generally read chapter novels with the teacher. At times they work on stories in the basal reader also. When one group is reading, the others have assignments at their seats. These seat assignments usually involve reading. Sometimes it is an art project or a response entry in their journal about the story they are reading. Sometimes they are assigned to read a chapter silently in the novel their group is covering. Whenever they believe they are finished with an assignment, the students know they should be reading silently on their own. They can read a book from the classroom library or one they picked out at their weekly library visit. They are also allowed to bring books from home. A big emphasis is placed on reading and to improve your reading ability in the classroom.

The teacher is experienced in the classroom and has been teaching for about thirty years. She has attended many conferences on reading techniques for the classroom and finds it important to keep abreast of the latest trends. She teaches both

third and fourth grade reading blocks each day. She is very caring in the classroom and provides a lot of positive reinforcement for her students.

Participants

All 23 students in the third grade class were used to do the study. They range in age from seven to nine. There are nine girls; six Caucasian and three Afro-American, and fourteen boys; nine Caucasian and five Afro-American. Eleven students are reading on level ten, seven are reading on level nine, three are reading on level eight, one is reading on level seven, and one is pulled out for resource and reading at level six.

Procedure

I conducted a survey in the classroom to assess student attitudes toward reading at school and at home. The survey consisted of eighteen questions alternating between one being about school and one being about home (see appendix A). The students were given four sheets of paper stapled together with pictures of Garfield on them. For each question the students were to circle one of four Garfield faces that they felt the most like. There was a happy face, a somewhat happy face, a somewhat sad face, and a sad face (see Appendix B). I read the questions orally to the students to avoid any student having reading difficulties with the survey. Before reading the questions to the students, I explained the survey by asking sample questions. I asked how do you feel about ice cream and how do you feel about basketball? I explained that everyone would have different answers, and it was fine. I explained that it was not a test, and I wanted them to answer as honestly as they could because their answers were not for a grade. It was for the teacher to see how they feel about reading.

After the survey was given, I assigned each happy face four points, each somewhat happy face three points, each somewhat sad face two points, and each sad face one point. I found the total amount of points for each child and the total amount of points for school and for home. I also found the total amount of points the students gave to each individual question.

I observed the reading groups in the classroom for the first seven weeks of school and again for a week in March. I watched teacher interaction with the students in all groups and out of the groups. I observed teacher expressions, corrections, and lessons taught.

The teacher meet with all three reading groups each day. During each group she read passages or lines from the literature that the group was reading. Most of the time these passages were from the pages that they students had read silently. The teacher asked questions about the passage she had selected. The questions asked students about the meanings of difficult words, asked them to make prediction about the ending of the story, or asked them to put themselves in the place of a certain character. The teacher allowed students to discuss answers and gave positive feedback for their efforts. During reading group, the teacher sometimes asked students to read a small passage also and then had a group discussion. Choral reading groups were not part of this classroom. Students were asked to write responses to what they read and received written feedback from the teacher the next day. The teacher also met with some of the low readers individually each day for more reading practice.

Results

The results found were a little different from what I had expected. I expected the attitudes of the high reading group to have the highest totals, and the attitudes of the low reading group to have the lowest totals. In other words, I expected that the attitudes would correlate with the level of reading of each student. First, the attitude totals of each student were placed on a continuum looking at where the students in each reading group fell (Table 1).

Table 1

TOTALS	GENDER	READING
33	BOY	LOW
36	BOY	MIDDLE
40	BOY	LOW
*41	BOY	HIGH
41	BOY	MIDDLE
*42	BOY	HIGH
47	BOY	LOW
*49	GIRL	MIDDLE
50	GIRL	HIGH
*50	BOY	HIGH
51	BOY	HIGH
*51	BOY	LOW
52	GIRL	MIDDLE
52	BOY	HIGH
*55	GIRL	MIDDLE
56	GIRL	HIGH
57	GIRL	MIDDLE
61	BOY	HIGH
64	GIRL	HIGH
70	GIRL	HIGH

* Indicates that the total for school was higher than the total for home

The students in the low reading group generally fell in the bottom half of the tallied totals, but not always because the student who is pulled out for resource is at the half way point and another low student is two ahead of him. No student in the low group was any higher than that. The surprising results were with the high reading group. These students were dispersed all through the continuum. The three highest totals were from high reading group students but so was the fourth lowest total. Generally, the high and middle reading groups are gender specific. The attitudes of the girls in the groups correlated with how well they read, but the attitudes of the boys in the groups did not. Actually on the continuum the seven lowest totals are boys from all three reading groups.

A comparison was made for each child between the total points given for their attitude toward reading in school and reading at home (Table 1). Out of 23 students, only six liked reading at school more than reading at home. Three of these children were boys in the top group, two were girls in the middle group, and the other was the boy who is pulled out for resource. All of the other children preferred to read at home rather than at school except for one girl whose totals were the same for both.

Another area of interest was with the individual questions. The question that received the most points by the entire class was "How do you feel when you read chapter books or novels that

you pick?". The next two questions tied with the most points and were about going to the library at school or with parents. The class gave the least amount of points to reading instead of going out for recess or reading instead of going out to play. Each of these received the same amount of points. One discrepancy in the questions was found. When asked straight out how they felt about reading at home and reading at school, the class gave two more points to reading at home. But when asked how they felt about reading a book during free time at school or free time at home, the class gave three more points to free time at school. The class most likely sees their free time at home as more exciting than their free time at school (Table 2).

Table 2

Class Average for each question

3.5	1. How do you feel when you read a book during free time at school?
3.4	2. How do you feel when you read a book during free time at home?
3.7	3. How do you feel about going to the library at school?
3.7	4. How do you feel about going to the library with you parents?
3.4	5. How do you feel about reading the stories your group is reading?
3.1	6. How do you feel about reading a book you pick out at home?
1.7	7. How do you feel about reading instead of going out for recess?
1.7	8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing at home?
3.0	9. How do you feel about reading basals?
4.0	10. How do you feel about reading chapter books or novels you pick?
2.7	11. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?

3.0	12.	How do you feel if someone at home asks you a question about what you read?
2.8	13.	How do you feel when its time for reading group?
2.6	14.	How do you feel about reading worksheets?
2.5	15.	How do you feel about reading during the summer?
3.6	16.	How do you feel about getting a book for a present?
3.3	17.	How do you feel about reading at school?
3.4	18.	How do you feel about reading at home?

Observations were also done in the classroom. The teacher spends more time with the low level reading group on average at the reading group table each day. She also spends extra time with these four boys, particularly the lowest reader individually for extra practice reading. During the low level reading group time, the teacher usually has her arm around one of the students and interacts positively. She makes eye contact and smiles when they answer her questions no matter if they are right or wrong. During their time, the teacher read passages from the book, some of which they had already read silently and some that they had not. After she read, she would ask comprehension questions and reflective questions on what they thought or felt or would do in the same situation. She also asked the students to read passages to the group. The passages were sometimes pages or paragraphs. "Word calling" was not allowed, but students were asked to follow along. Students were rarely interrupted while reading and only politely for questions to the group about the content read. If a student paused on a difficult word time was given for the student to decode it. If the student asked, the teacher would assist

with the word and the student would continue. Nothing was said negatively about a student's mistakes. After reading group, the students were given an assignment to finish reading the chapter silently. Phonics was not part of reading group activity. Word study and other phonics work was reserved for spelling time.

Outside of the reading group in whole class sessions, the students were generally treated equally. The lower readers were not asked to read difficult passages in front of the class but did read writing workshop passages and things at their level to the class. These students were allowed to ask questions like others and were called on equally. The lower readers were even given more positive reinforcement than others for good behavior and good work. When I visited, the teacher always encouraged the low and middle readers to show me how much their reading had improved and what good readers they were now. These students generally had more behavior problems than the students in the high reading group but were treated fairly in regards to punishment.

The teacher ran the middle and high reading groups in the same way that she ran the low group. She spent more time with the middle group on average than the high group but not as much as with the low group. From observations when they were separated, the high group was given the most to read silently and at home and rarely read chorally in a group. The teacher did pick passages from what they read silently to read out loud by

her or a student and discuss. They were asked meanings of words, comprehension questions, and reflective questions just like the low group. The high group was expected to communicate more with the teacher through journals and responses than the low group. The high readers received a smiling teacher, who interacted in a positive way during reading time.

The teacher treated the students in the high group equally outside of reading group also. They were given difficult things to read to the class or to a group because they could handle the reading level. These students generally had less behavior problems than the other students. The teacher had high expectations for the students in the high group and did not loosen up as much when dealing with this group. They also were not usually part of class jokes with other teachers that came in the classroom because the extra positive attention was given to the lower readers.

Summary and Conclusion

As a result of the structure of the classroom and the special emphasis placed on reading, the attitudes of the readers did not always correlate with the level of their reading. The students are encouraged to always read for pleasure and given a large assortment of books from which to pick. The teacher also treats her reading groups equally if not giving more attention to the low levels. These reasons may help explain why these results differ from research on classroom ability grouping.

Since the attitude survey results showed the lower level readers toward the bottom, these readers most likely tend not to like reading because it is difficult for them and a struggle. No one enjoys doing something that is difficult and in the case of reading this creates a cycle making it difficult for the students to improve their abilities. The dispersion of the attitudes of the high level readers is most likely due to peer pressure. The boys were the ones who mostly said that they did not like to read. The whole class said that they would rather be out playing than reading. In our society boys are generally taught to go out and just play more than girls who are taught to be still and not cause trouble. The boys wrote that they like reading less because they are supposed to be out playing more than sitting still and reading. It is not as 'cool' to like reading no matter how well you can do it.

The students, as a class, said they liked to read at home more than school. This is explained by the fact that they like to pick what they read more than be told what to read. At home they have more freedom to read what they like and are less likely to be questioned about it after reading. Students said they liked to go to the library which is wonderful for improving reading and attitudes, but also shows that students like a choice in what they read.

The lower level readers are not opposed to reading in this class because the teacher treats the group like the high level readers. The students do know that they are reading at a lower level than the others in their class, but they are not treated badly for it (maybe even better). These students are encouraged and constantly given positive feedback about how well they are doing and the improvements they are making. This shows these students that they are of individual worth and are getting the help they need to read better. Three students in the class have also moved up in reading groups from the beginning of school. This demonstrates to others that it is possible to move groups, and it is not hopeless. The low level group started in level three this year and is now in level seven and eight. The students know this and can see improvement. This setting adds to the positive attitudes toward reading found by the survey.

After working with the students in this third grade class, I have found some important implications for teachers. First, if a

teacher is placed in a classroom or system that uses ability grouping, attitudes and reading levels can improve. The teacher can do this by treating the low group like the high group. This positive treatment of the low readers is good for self-esteem and can counteract the negative social effects of being in the low group. This teacher made being in the low group fun and not a negative for her students which helped their attitudes.

Second, students need choice in their reading selection in order to promote positive attitudes toward reading. When a child is given the opportunity to choose his or her own book, the student is able to read about his or her own interests and tends to like reading more. A large classroom library and frequent visits to the library with the class can add to students choice in the classroom. By giving students time to read silently for pleasure, a teacher can allow students to discover the joys of reading.

Third, creating a classroom centered on literature with some student choices will most likely improve attitudes more than concentrating on basal readers and phonics. By concentrating on stories in literature, students will view reading as fun and not just a lot of workbook pages and hard work.

Fourth, students do not necessarily have to like to read to be good at it, but students who are poor readers, more often do not like to read. Teachers can improve attitudes toward reading through choice and positive responses in a classroom. Students

will want to read more and therefore will improve their reading levels. Students must read more to read better.

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Appendix A

Reading Attitudes Survey

1. How do you feel when you read a book during free time at school?
2. How do you feel when you read a book during free time at home?
3. How do you feel about going to the library at school?
4. How do you feel about going to the library with you parents?
5. How do you feel about reading the stories your group is reading?
6. How do you feel about reading a book you pick out at home?
7. How do you feel about reading instead of going out for recess?
8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing at home?
9. How do you feel about reading basals?
10. How do you feel about reading chapter books or novels you pick?
11. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?
12. How do you feel if someone at home asks you a question about what you read?
13. How do you feel when its time for reading group?
14. How do you feel about reading worksheets?
15. How do you feel about reading during the summer?
16. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?
17. How do you feel about reading at school?
18. How do you feel about reading at home?

Appendix B